

Applicant Name Milk River Irrigation Project Joint Board of Control (JBOC)
Project Name St. Mary Canal, Halls Coulee Drop 3, Plunge Pool Concrete Repair

Project Abstract

For almost 95 years, the St. Mary Diversion of the Milk River Project has served to augment the Milk River water supply. The St. Mary Diversion provides an important renewable resource to residents along the Milk River. The St. Mary Diversion was built by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to provide supplemental irrigation water along the Milk River, but has evolved into a multi-use project. The St. Mary Diversion supplies water for 120,731 Milk River Irrigation Project acres, nine municipalities, and Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge. It provides numerous other fish, wildlife, and recreation benefits.

The USBR operates and maintains the St. Mary Diversion. The distribution system is well beyond its design life and many of the appurtenant structures need to be repaired. Five concrete drop structures near the downstream end of the canal provide a combined drop of approximately 214 feet to the North Fork of the Milk River. The drops vary in length from 130 feet to 330 feet. Each drop consists of an inlet, a chute, and a plunge pool.

The drops are numbered 1 through 5 from upstream to downstream. Of the five drops, the plunge pools associated with Drops 2 and 3 are in the worst condition. The Drop 3 plunge pool is thought to be a slightly higher priority because there is a hole through the left wingwall.

Using Renewable Resource Grant funds, the JBOC, in cooperation with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) and USBR, wishes to contract for planned repairs to the Drop 3 plunge pool.

Augmentation of the Milk River water supply is vital to conserving the Milk River water supply and preserving the agricultural-based economy of Montana's Hi-Line.